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### Conspiracy Theories & The Mind: Personality of Conspiratorial Beliefs

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# Conspiracy Theories & The Mind: Personality of Conspiratorial Beliefs

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## Introduction

- Since conspiracy theories are easily accessible online, individuals who may have not been exposed to them before are now diving into them and believing that the topics discussed have validity to them (Douglas, et al. 2019)
- Many people believe in conspiracy theories as was shown this past year with the attack on the U.S. Capitol due to the theory that the 2020 Election was stolen
- Based upon previous research, common traits involved with conspiratorial thinking include paranoia, paranoid ideation, and schizotypal behavior (Goreis & Voracek, 2019)
- The dark triad consists of psychopathy, narcissism, and Machiavellianism
- Previous research also shows that deviance directly relates to traits of narcissism and psychopathy which is an indicator of conspiratorial thinking (Birkás, et al., 2018)

## Research Question & Method

- Can the personality traits of The Dark Triad be correlated to a person's belief in conspiracy theories?
- We hypothesized that there would be a positive correlation between each of the three traits, narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy, with conspiratorial thinking.
- Each of the participants were given The Dirty Dozen personality inventory and the Generic Conspiratorial thinking inventory.

## Conclusion and Future Directions

- An extremely weak correlation was found and none of the results were significant in our test
- Researchers can run this study with a larger sample
  - Researchers could use a more specific population or random sampling
- Further research may expand on this research by focusing on psychopathy
  - results were the closest to being significant with an underpowered study
- There are many other personality traits that could potentially show a correlation if studied further

## Discussion

- The study did not show a correlation of conspiratorial thinking and any of the three traits associated with The Dark Triad.
- The study being underpowered could be a potential reason for overall lack of correlation.
- Future researchers could yield a larger population and possibly see different results.

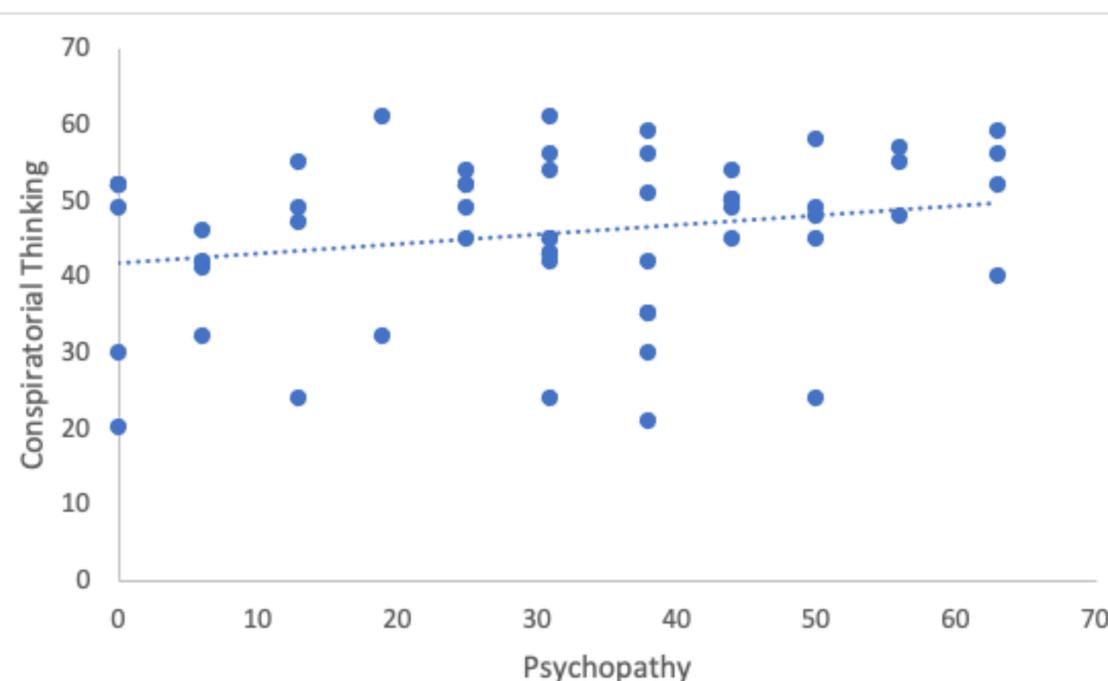
## Results

A one sample T test ( $n = 55$ ) was used to see if there was a significant correlation between the Dark Triad and conspiratorial beliefs. See Figure 1 Each of the three personality traits displayed small, positive correlations with conspiratorial thinking:

- Narcissism ( $r = .045$ )
- Psychopathy ( $r = .221$ )
- Machiavellianism ( $r = .167$ )

All the traits were test with a p value of .05 and with that, none of them were significant; this indicates that we failed to reject null hypothesis and that no correlation was observed. The measure of psychopathy had the smallest P value (.052), which may indicate a possibility of finding significant results in a study with a stronger power.

## Results



## References

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